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ABSTRACT

The urban-associated adjustment problems of Spanish speaking migrants to Seattle, Washington were examined. A sample of 100 migrant household heads were interviewed to learn why they had moved to Seattle, to gain insights into the adjustment process, and to search for ways to facilitate their accommodation to an urban life style. All of the Spanish speaking minority group have adaption problems, such as language, but distinct subgroups have differing social and economic characteristics that are identified with unique adjustment problems. The primary discerning variable is whether the migrant household moved from a rural or an urban background. An effort was made to ascertain, from the migrant's vantage point, the role and effectiveness of public agencies in facilitating the adjustment. The report concludes with policy recommendations for alleviating some of the individual and societal dysfunctions of this transition--i.e., the establishment of a widely publicized bilingual information agency. (Author/PS)

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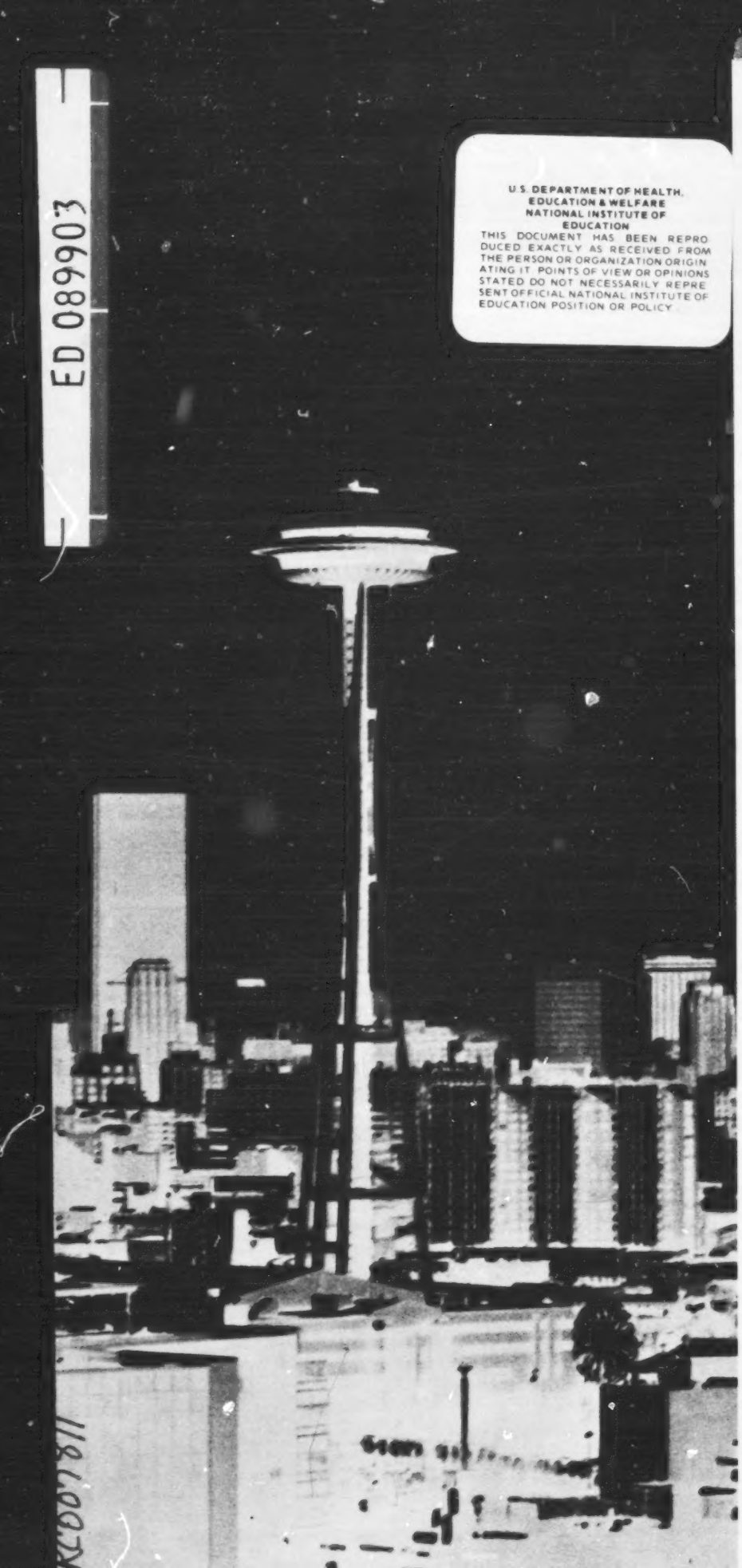

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Spanish-Speaking Migrants in Seattle, Washington

Sergio Sepulveda
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Washington Agricultural Experiment Station

Bulletin 771

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ABSTRACT

The work reported herein examines the urban-associated adjustment problems of Spanish-speaking migrants to the city of Seattle, Washington. A sample of 100 migrant household heads were interviewed to learn why they had moved to Seattle, to gain insights into the adjustment process, and to search for ways to facilitate their accommodation to an urban life style.

All of the Spanish-speaking minority group have adaption problems, such as language. But distinct subgroups have differing social and economic characteristics that are identified with unique adjustment problems. The primary discerning variable is whether the migrant household moved to Seattle from a rural or an urban background.

An effort was made to ascertain, from the migrant's vantage point, the role and effectiveness of public agencies in facilitating the adjustment. The report concludes with policy recommendations for alleviating some of the individual and societal dysfunctions of this transition.

Key words: Urban migrants. Spanish-speaking. Seattle, Washington. Household head survey. Social and economic characteristics. Adjustment process.

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INTRODUCTION

To move has become common. It is the exception to the rule for you or your neighbors to be living in the same community or state where you were born. This increasing geographic and employment mobility has its roots in the march of science and technology. Migration has become an integral part of modernization.

Not only has it become common to move, it has become common to move to the city. Urbanization has been an integral part of the industrial revolution. For millions of individuals and families this has meant a simultaneous confrontation with the anxieties, uncertainties, and anticipations of the move itself and the different life style of the urban dweller. The exploratory work reported here examines but a limited dimension of the migration fabric.

This is a report on a study of 100 Spanish-speaking households who migrated to Seattle, Washington (2). While we have a rich literature on the so-called Mexican farm laborer-migrant, we know little about the experiences of Spanish-speaking peoples who migrate to urban centers. Where did they originate? What were their aspirations, and to what extent are these aspirations being realized? How do they view their loss of the familiar and the cultural shock of the unfamiliar? What was the role, if any, of public organizations in facilitating their adjustment? Might these organizations do more, and if so, how?

The 100 heads of Spanish-speaking households were asked about these and other social and economic experiences associated with their migration to Seattle. The analyses of their responses, and some policy implications, form the content of this report.

THE STUDY PLAN

The overriding purpose of this inquiry is to seek feasible means of improving the well-being of Spanish-speaking migrants to Seattle. Of course, many constraints limit the scope of the inquiry. One of the major constraints in this study is the nearly complete absence of secondary sources of information concerning Spanish-speaking people residing in Seattle. Therefore, a general objective of the study is to ascertain social and economic characteristics of this group and to identify the problems met in their migration-assimilation experience.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. identify premigratory social and economic characteristics of the individuals
2. determine their present social and economic situation
3. identify and elaborate the stages or distinguishing sets of experiences (decision to migrate, transition and adjustment experiences, etc.) associated with migration
4. ascertain, from the viewpoint of the intended recipient, the role of public agencies in facilitating the adjustment process.

Selection of Seattle for the location of this inquiry is based on two premises: First, Seattle is large enough to have the attributes of an urban social system. Second, there is a large and relatively recent migratory population of Spanish-speaking people in Seattle that can be identified and located for a study group.

A limitation of particular importance to this work is that there is no secondary source of information on number or location of Spanish-speaking people living in Seattle. Because time and funds prohibited a census to gather this information, a list of names and addresses was solicited from leaders of Spanish-speaking organizations in Seattle.

Leaders of the Spanish-speaking community were identified as individuals at the head of governmental social, or religious organizations serving this clientele group. The leaders were informed that the only criteria for placing names on the partial sample listing were:

1. that the household members' native tongue be Spanish
2. that they had moved to Seattle during the past several years, preferably the last 5 years.

A total of about 400 households were identified from which to select the study group. A random sample of 100 heads of households was selected from the partial census to form the core of the analysis. Data were gathered by personal interview schedules. Interviews were conducted in February, 1971, by a team of seven bilingual university social science graduate students. Questionnaires were available in both Spanish and English, so respondents could use their preferred language. In addition to the information gathered from the 100 household heads, unstructured interviews were conducted with about 20 leaders and employees of public agencies who have contact with Spanish speaking peoples in Seattle.

THE MIGRATION PROCESS

What are the most important elements or variables that enter into a decision to move from one locality to another? The migration decision making process at the level of a single individual is so complex as to defy specification in weighting of all the elements involved. On the other hand, to reduce the problem to a single element, such as potential economic gain, provides very little understanding of the individual's motivation.

For the purposes of this study, a simplified model from earlier migration research (3,8) was used as an aid to structuring the investigation. The major premise of this model is that a decision to migrate depends upon the interaction between two sets of relative forces. One set is comprised of dissatisfaction with the place of origin,

and thus tends to *push* the individual away from his original location. Another set of forces are the expected advantages of the new location; these tend to *pull* toward the destination.

The components of these push-pull forces are economic, social, and psychological characteristics of the individual's world. A decision to migrate, then, becomes a function of comparing and weighting these characteristics and deciding that the advantages of a new location more than offset the advantages of staying where you are.

The geography of migration

Within the 100 households in the study, 187 persons were adults and 351 were dependent children, a total of 538 people in the composite study group. For purposes of delineating geographic migration patterns, each of the 187 adults is viewed as a unit of analysis.

Three distinct geographic patterns of migration were found among the study group:

1. interstate
2. international combined with interstate (e.g., from Mexico or Cuba plus interstate migration)
3. International (e.g., from Latin America directly to Seattle).

The interstate migration pattern typically involved more than one move (table 1). Similarly, the international-interstate pattern was a step-migration process (table 2).

The variations in these migration patterns are primarily a consequence of differing economic opportunities. Those individuals who moved directly to Seattle from their place of origin usually had a job waiting for them in the city. On the other hand, those who moved intermittently before settling in Seattle followed the more typical migration pattern; i.e., seeking seasonal work wherever available.

Of the 187 adult migrants included in this study, two-thirds originated in 11 different states of the United States. The remaining one-third moved to Seattle from nine different Latin American countries (tables 1 and 2). Texas and Mexico combined account for 49% of the adult migrants.

Not only are the sample members heterogeneous in geographic origin, they also differ in background. Forty-five percent of the adults were either reared or worked in a rural setting, while 55% were raised in an urban setting.

Migration decision inputs

To better understand the decision making process that an individual or family undergoes before moving to a new location, and to help form policies to influence population distribution, it is necessary to explore the motivations or inputs to the migration decision. For the households interviewed in this study, the major sources of information about the social and economic "climate" in Seattle were friends and relatives (table 3). Nearly three-fourths of the households providing information on this question relied on noninstitutional sources, primarily relatives and friends. Nearly one-fourth of the families reported they moved to Seattle without seeking prior information. However, it is likely that they had at least some prior knowledge, however meager, of Seattle. Perhaps

TABLE 1. Interstate migration patterns, sample of Spanish-speaking Seattle residents, 1971

State of origin	Intermediate locations	Number of adults
Texas	Central Washington[1] Montana Oregon California Utah Colorado-California	65
New Mexico	Utah Central Washington[1]	14
Yakima, Washington	None	13[2]
California	Alaska Oregon	9
Colorado	Utah Central Washington[1]	9
Arizona	Central Washington[1]	7
Kansas	Central Washington[1]	2
Wyoming	Montana	1
Utah	None	1
Kentucky	None	1
Michigan	None	1
TOTAL		123

[1]Yakima Valley
[2]Intrastate Migration

TABLE 2. International-interstate and intercontinental migration patterns, sample of Spanish-speaking Seattle residents, 1971

Country of origin	Intermediate locations	Number of adults
Mexico	Texas-Utah California-Oregon Texas Texas-California New Mexico Montana Alaska	28
Cuba	Spain Florida Honduras	18
Guatemala	None	6
Uruguay	None	4
Ecuador	None	2
Nicaragua	None	2
Chile	None	2
Peru	None	1
Costa Rica	Panama-Illinois	1
TOTAL		64

TABLE 3. Premigration sources of information about Seattle as reported by a sample of Spanish-speaking peoples, 1971

Major information source	Number of households	Percent
Friends	33	39
Relatives	28	33
Government representatives	1	1
Company representatives	1	1
Churches	1	1
Newspapers	1	1
No prior information	20	24
TOTAL	85	100

their information was acquired so informally or so long ago that they were unable to specify it.

It is important to note that the friends and relatives providing information reside in Seattle. These contacts were also able to help the migrating household when it arrived in Seattle. These family ties help explain why 86% of the household units in the study migrated to Seattle as a total family unit.[1] In a sense, the friends and relatives provided a large component of needed mobility assistance. Only 14% of the heads of households went ahead without their families, sending for them after finding housing and employment.

Another dimension of the extended family structure acts as a constraint on migration--strong family ties in the locale from which one is moving. These ties were quite strong, as indicated by the fact that 70% of the migrants had some form of direct association with relatives in their place of origin at least once a month before moving to Seattle.

Further insights concerning the decision to migrate were provided by asking respondents to identify the major reasons for moving. Within the previously presented model of forces influencing mobility, these responses can be classified as "pull" or "push" factors.

Pull factors were overwhelmingly more important in the decision to move than were push factors, the former comprising 95% of the responses (table 4). Among the pull factors, anticipation of improved economic opportunity was the major single factor attracting migrants to Seattle. Approximately 83% of the heads of households gave this reason as the primary one (see table 4, footnote). Nine percent of the household heads said their main reason for moving to Seattle was to be closer to family members already located there.

Of the 5% who listed push factors as dominant in their decision making, 3% disliked the political atmosphere in their former location and 2% simply said they did not like it where they had been living.

Years in Seattle

Because of the emphasis this study gives to the problem of adjustment and assimilation of these Spanish-speaking peoples in their new urban setting, the length of residence in Seattle at the time of interview is particularly relevant. In the partial census conducted for this study, we tried to include only those who had moved to Seattle within the past 5 years. Ultimately, 73% of those interviewed had been living in Seattle for 5 years or less. This recency of migration increases the reliability of the information. Recency reduces bias and reflects the current situations of the respondents.

TABLE 4. Push-pull factors in the migration decision making process, sample of Spanish-speaking Seattle residents, 1971[1]

Factor	Number of household heads	Percent
PULL		
Anticipated improved economic opportunities	83	83
Closer to family	9	9
Closer to friends	1	1
Army experience	1	1
Anticipation of improved medical care	1	1
PUSH		
Dislike of political atmosphere	3	3
Dislike former locale	2	2
TOTAL	100	100

[1]The classification of factors as "pull" or "push" factors is not a pure construct. The inadequacies of the place of origin and the advantages of the place of destination are not absolutes, but rather, they are relative to each other (1). Therefore, a pull factor, such as anticipated improved economic opportunities in the place of destination, may be compounded by a push factor of dissatisfaction with perceived opportunities in the place of origin.

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

On the premise that the demographic composition of the households studied is germane to interpretations of the adjustment and assimilation experiences of migrant families, selected demographic data are presented. Of the 100 households in the study, 87 had 2 adult members present. The remaining household heads were distributed as follows: five were one-member households, five were separated or divorced, and three were widowed. Of these 187 adults, 90 were females and 97 were males.

The adult males averaged slightly older than adult females. The modal age interval of the males was 31-40 years, and 20-31 years for the females. The mean age of the males was 36 years, of the females, 33 years. Seventy-four percent of the adult migrants were under 40 years of age. This distribution is consistent with the hypothesis

[1] The definition of "family" is two or more individuals united by marriage, blood, or adoption living in the same household. A "household" includes all people who occupy a group of rooms or a single room that constitute a housing unit. For this study, the single units of analysis were all families, except for five units that were one-member households. With this minor exception, the terms "family" and "household" are interchangeable in this report.

of the "age selectivity of migration," namely, that persons ranging in age from the late teens through 40 years are more geographically mobile than either younger or older persons.

The average number of persons per household in the study was 5.38, substantially above the national average of 3.17 persons per household (5). In spite of this large size, extended families (other relatives living with the original family unit of parents and children), typical of much of Latin American and some rural areas of the United States, were not prevalent among the study population.

Apparently, the relatively large household size among the migrants to Seattle did not seriously limit mobility. This is true in spite of higher moving costs for a large household and the likelihood of more community ties in the place of origin. While the household size of the respondent group exceeds the national average, it is smaller than the household of the average Washington migrant farm worker, 6.2 persons per household (7).

The two subgroups, those with rural and urban backgrounds, show some distinct differences. The primary difference is the amount of education. Those with rural backgrounds and rural employment experience had a median education of 7 years. Those with urban backgrounds averaged 12 years. The median for the entire United States is 12.1 years of formal schooling.

Forty-five percent of the study group had at one time been a part of the rural migrant farm labor force. These former rural labor force migrants, who had now settled in the city, averaged 7 years of schooling, 2 years more than the median for all migrant farm workers, 5 years. This suggests the possibility of urban migration selectivity based on level of educational attainment.

EARNING A LIVING

It is well established that economic motives play a central role in the decision of people to move from one location to another. The Spanish-speaking peoples studied were no exception. Migrants are attracted to areas where employment opportunities are presumed to be relatively abundant and where they can expect to receive higher pay for their work.

Of course, various costs are associated with migration. These are typically divided into monetary and nonmonetary costs. The monetary costs, composed largely of cash outlays associated with travel, were explicitly considered by the members of the study group when they made their decision to migrate. However, they were less conscious of the so-called nonmonetary or implicit costs. For example, the migrants did not explicitly consider the possible earnings foregone while traveling, searching for work, or learning a new job.

Some nonmonetary costs of migration are psychic costs. At least two dimensions of psychic costs are associated with moving. First, there is the reluctance to leave friends, relatives, and familiar surroundings. Second, there is the fear of uncertainty and the psychological distress of adapting to a new environment. Even though these costs do not involve money outlays, they are very real and may considerably influence the decision to migrate.

Offsetting these monetary and nonmonetary costs associated with migration are the returns. There may be not only monetary returns (higher wages, less unemployment), but also substantial psychic returns (the renewal of old acquaintances, being closer to favorite relatives, being in a more favorable climate). The higher postmigratory nominal money returns must, of couse, be evaluated in terms of real income, as mitigated by the comparative costs of living before and after migration.

Employment

Prior to migration, 45% of the household heads had been employed in agriculture (table 5). This group, as well as the 22% employed as craftsmen, work in occupations that typically involve substantial seasonal unemployment. Not only did those unemployed at the time of the survey (16%) come from these seasonally unstable jobs, but also the respondents employed in agriculture or as craftsmen before migration said they had been able to work only about 6 months of the year before moving to Seattle.

TABLE 5. Types of employment, before and after migration, sample of Spanish-speaking Seattle residents, 1971

Employment classification	Premigration	Postmigration
	Percent	
Agricultural labor	45	14
Personal services	30	25
Craftsmen, skilled and semiskilled	22	42
Professionals	3	3
Unemployed[1]	--	16
TOTAL	100	100

[1]Of the 16% (also 16 individuals) unemployed at the time of the survey, 12 had rural backgrounds and 4 had urban backgrounds. Their most likely employment would be as agricultural laborers or as semiskilled craftsmen.

The major shift in type of employment associated with movement to Seattle is from agricultural labor to skilled and semiskilled craftsmen's occupations (table 5). There was a smaller proportionate shift from the personal services category to craftsmen. The most significant observation about the change in types of employment is that the skilled and semiskilled craftsmen jobs are apparently the most accessible ones for the Spanish-speaking migrant upon movement to an urban industrial center.

Only three men followed professional occupations before and after their migration. All three had moved directly from a Latin American country to Seattle.[2]

The above information on shifts in employment patterns of those interviewed compares two points in time, before migration to Seattle and the time of the survey. Between moving to Seattle and the time of the survey,

[2] The professions of these migrants are law, medicine, and veterinarian. All three migrated for political reasons. Only one had the assurance of a job in Seattle before moving.

many of those questioned changed from one employer to another. Over three-fourths of those who had had more than one employer since their move to Seattle had initiated the change in jobs themselves because of higher earnings and steadier employment on the new job. One fourth of those with multiple job experience since arriving in Seattle had been laid off. It typically took about a month for these people to find another job.

After their migration to Seattle, the subgroup with a rural background averaged about 2 months of unemployment per year. Some of this is "voluntary" in the sense that they chose to change jobs, and some of it results from being laid off. The urban background subgroup averaged only 2 to 3 weeks of unemployment per year.

Income levels

The average premigration annual income of those households with rural backgrounds was under $1,500 (table 6). Most of them had held low paying agricultural jobs, and were employed for only a few months of the year. On the average, this group of households had tripled their annual incomes since moving to Seattle.

TABLE 6. Average annual household incomes, before and after migration, sample of Spanish-speaking Seattle residents, 1971

Background	Percent of respondents	Average annual household income	
		Premigration[1]	Postmigration
Rural	45[2]	$1,375	$4,100
Urban:			
Nonprofessionals	52[3]	$2,425	$4,100
Professionals	3	$6,500	$6,200

[1]Since some respondents had migrated directly to Seattle from Latin American countries, the purchasing power of their premigration income is biased downward in comparison with the purchasing power of a similar income in the United States.

[2]Most of these household heads had jobs related to agriculture before migration and reported being unemployed from 6 to 8 months per year prior to migration.

[3]Nearly half the household heads in this group reported being unemployed from 5 to 6 months per year before migration.

The 52% of households with urban backgrounds and nonprofessional occupations reported premigration annual household earnings of about $2,500. Nearly half of this subgroup also reported much unemployment as one of the reasons for their small incomes. Since moving to Seattle, the average household income of this subgroup had increased by about 70%.

The before- and after-migration comparison of household incomes for the 3% in professional occupations contrasts with that of the lower income averages. Their absolute incomes decreased by an average of about $300 per year. This is largely the result of language difficulties or the need for some retraining before exercising their full potential as professionals.

The preceding before- and after-migration household income data are presented by group averages and are at best approximations because of the problems of depending on recall of memory of respondents. Current household income data are much more reliable. These current accounts are available on a monthly basis; thus, monthly household expenditures can be compared more accurately.

Nearly half of the respondents with rural backgrounds have monthly incomes ranging from $300 to $400 (table 7). The median monthly income of this subgroup is $341. The urban-background subgroup had median monthly household income of $514. Put another way, 78% of the rural-background subgroup earn less than $400 per month, compared with 34% of those with an urban background (table 7). Furthermore, none of the rural-background subgroup earn in excess of $600 per month, whereas 44% of those with an urban background have incomes above this level.

The most feasible, though partial, explanation for these differences in income is the previously noted difference in education. The rural-background subgroup averaged only 7 years of schooling, compared with 12 years for the urban-background subgroup.

Another factor in the earnings differential between these two subgroups is the number of employed workers per household. In 12% of the urban background families, both the mother and father are employed, compared with only 2% for the rural-background subgroup.

More than half (54%) of the study households had incomes below the urban poverty level in 1970; i.e., less than $390 income per month (6). Even when the income levels of the study group are compared with incomes of all persons in the United States of Spanish origin, the former group is relatively disadvantaged. About one in every four persons of Spanish origin in the United States was below the low income level in 1970 (4), compared with two of every four persons in the study group.

In addition to the association of income with residence background, it was hypothesized that income would be positively correlated with the number of years the migrant families had lived in Seattle. However, this hypothesis was not supported by the analysis, neither for the total group nor for the rural and urban background subgroups. This suggests that during the period that most of the families had lived in Seattle (73% had been there for 5

TABLE 7. Monthly household income, by frequency groups, sample of Spanish-speaking Seattle residents, 1971

Monthly household income (dollars)	Background		Total (rural-urban)	Cumulative total
	Rural	Urban		
	Number of households			
0-100	2	1	3	3
101-200	4	0	4	7
201-300	8	8	16	23
301-400	21	10	31	54
401-500	8	8	16	70
501-600	2	4	6	76
601-700	0	3	3	79
701-800	0	5	5	84
801-900	0	7	7	91
901-1000	0	6	6	97
1001-1100	0	3	3	100
TOTAL	45	55	100	100

years or less), their ability to improve their income was primarily a function of their capabilities upon arriving in Seattle. Even though three-fourths of the respondents reported that they were living better economically now than before migration, length of time in Seattle was not a significant income determinant within the study group.

Aspirations

The respondents were realistic when asked about their aspirations for jobs and promotions. They desired upward mobility in their trade or particular job in order to earn higher incomes, but were generally aware of their individual limitations. Typical handicaps were lack of education, language problems, and in about one-fourth of the cases, few or no acquired skills. When these occupational aspirations were expressed in terms of dollar income, again the respondents seemed to be realistic. They were optimistic about their economic future, though realizing that their goals would not be easily attained.

Aspiration levels were proportional to current income. The respondents who were currently receiving the lower incomes had aspired to raise their earnings by $50 to $100 per month. On the average, this represents about a 25% increase. At the opposite end of the current income distribution, future income aspirations ranged from $300- to $400-increases per month. An increment of this magnitude would represent about a 65% increase over present earnings.

There is some basis, though speculative, for suggesting that the level of aspired increased earnings along the continuum from low to high is consistent with the probabilities of realizing these increases. The current higher income earners are among the better educated and higher skilled members of the respondent group. They are, therefore, likely to achieve relatively greater proportionate income rewards in the future than are those less well prepared to improve their future earning capacities. It is particularly noteworthy that the respondents themselves were aware of this phenomenon. These findings also suggest a positive relationship between levels of income aspiration and past levels of income.

SPENDING PATTERNS

The economic well-being of households is traditionally evaluated by measuring income flow, that is, income and expenditure patterns. Having viewed the income patterns of the study group, we now gain additional perspective through an analysis of spending patterns. Comparisons with average lower budget Seattle family expenditure patterns show the relative well-being of the study group.

Nondurable goods

The household expenditure patterns of the study group and the average lower budget urban family in Seattle showed major differences (table 8). The rural and urban background subgroups of the study sample spend about the same proportions of income on the various items of family living. Of course, those with urban backgrounds spend a greater absolute amount, for they receive higher incomes than do the rural-background subgroup.

Food is the major item and accounts for about one-third of total expenditures (table 8). This substantial proportion for food is a function of both the relatively low income and the average family size of 5.38 persons.

Housing accounts for about one-fourth of the study group expenditures. One fifth of the households were occupying low income housing provided by regional government institutions. The majority of the households in the study lived in rather modest housing and some were in substandard housing.[3]

Health care is the expenditure showing the most relative difference between the rural and urban migrants, 9% and 13% of total expenditures, respectively. In absolute terms, the rural migrant spends only half as much for health care as his urban counterpart. Some of this difference can be attributed to the considerably greater incidence of family health insurance among the urban background subgroup or to direct payments for health care. Furthermore, the lower income, rural-background subgroup made more use of free or low-cost health facilities of public assistance agencies.

The majority of the study group lived substantial distances from their places of work. Few or no public transportation facilities are available for these routes. Hence, personal ownership and use of automobiles are needed for commuting to places of employment. Ten percent of the household expenditures, then, were allocated for transportation.

One of the few questions respondents were reluctant to answer concerned absolute amount of savings. However, we learned that one-fourth (24%) of the rural-

TABLE 8. Comparative monthly family expenditure patterns, sample of Spanish-speaking Seattle residents and an average "lower-budget" urban family, Seattle

Item	Spanish-speaking Seattle residents[1]				Lower budget Seattle family[2] expenditures[3]	
	Rural background expenditures[3]		Urban background expenditures[3]			
	$	%	$	%	$	%
Rent[4]	$74	25	$86	22	$140	25
Food	85	30	119	32	174	32
Health care	25	9	50	13	55	10
Clothing	25	9	32	9	79	14
Transport	28	10	36	10	43	8
Other	50	17	53	14	63	11
TOTAL	$287[5]	100	$376[5]	100	$554	100

[1]The mean number of individuals per family is 5.38.

[2]Based on four-person family, autumn 1971 Urban Family Budgets and Geographical Comparative Indexes, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 72-240, April 27, 1972, table 1, p. 9.

[3]The Spanish-speaking, Seattle, data are medians and the Lower Budget Urban Family data are means.

[4]Includes household operations and furnishings in addition to rent.

[5]Totals do not coincide with median incomes noted earlier ($341 for rural and $514 for urban-background subgroups) because: the above are sums of medians, savings are not included, and accuracy depends upon respondent recall.

[3] These classifications are based on personal observations by enumerators.

background subgroup and 38% of the urban migrant families allocated some of their income to savings.

Durable goods

About one in every four families interviewed either owned or was buying its home (table 9). The majority of the home owners were families who lived in Seattle 5 years or more or were among the higher-income families of the respondents. Again, the positive relationship between higher income and urban background is evident, for 46% of urban-background migrant families owned or were buying homes compared to only 7% of the rural-background migrants.

TABLE 9. Ownership of durable goods, sample of Spanish-speaking Seattle residents, 1971

Item	Migrants' backgrounds			
	Rural		Urban	
	Number of families	Percent	Number of families	Percent
House	3	7	25	46
Automobile	37	82	55	100
Noncolor television or radio	39	87	53	96
Color television	0	0	2	4
Record player	10	22	31	56

Automobile ownership was nearly universal among those interviewed. All urban background migrants owned a car, as did 82% (37 and 45 households) of the rural-background subgroup.

All but six households owned a television set or a radio. Two urban-background family homes had color tv. Record players were less common; they were in only two of five homes, on the average.

The respondents were asked whether they had any debts other than a home mortgage. Fifty-five percent were making payments on debts. Indebtedness was somewhat more common among the relatively higher income urban-background subgroup. About 60% of these households were in debt, compared with 50% of the rural subgroup. The most frequent debts in both subgroups were associated with doctor or hospital bills, the balance for automobile payments and miscellaneous items.

Living situations

The enumerators made subjective observations on the general living situations of the families interviewed. The overall living conditions of the Spanish-speaking households in the study group were poor to modest. For the most part, the quality of the houses, automobiles, major furnishings, etc., was not equal to that expected in the homes of Americans in middle income brackets.

Remember that over half of the households fell below the poverty level. Interviewers reported that at least one-third of them were indeed living in substandard conditions. The houses were extremely old, poorly heated and in bad repair. These were typically single unit dwellings of two or three bedrooms for families containing up to six children. In all such cases, the houses were being rented. Furnishings were meager, consisting of bare essentials, often improvised. There is additional support for these judgments of the interviewers. The rural-background subgroup expenditures for family living were about one-half, and the urban background subgroup about two-thirds, of the amount available to the lower budget Seattle four person family (table 8). In spite of these conditions, the families said they were *happier* in Seattle than in their previous locations because of their *higher* level of living.

THE ADAPTATION PROCESS

Anyone who has moved into a community, area, or region that is unfamiliar or strange is aware of the stresses of adapting to their new surroundings. When this experience is compounded by such factors as a foreign language, rural-to-urban transition, cross-cultural movement, and membership in a minority group, the problems of adaptation or accommodation to the new environment are multiplied many times. Such is the case for the households in this study.

What, then, are some of the major problems these households face in adapting to their newly found urban surroundings in Seattle? The analyses that follow deal with some of the social and economic dimensions of this adaptation process as viewed by the migrants. Some of these dimensions may not be reality, but they exist as perceived and are complex problems in the eyes of the respondents. The process of adaptation to a new environment is complex, involving at least social, economic and psychological aspects of human experience. The intent is to provide some insights into this adaptation or accommodation process that may assist in modifying existing programs or in forming new ones to facilitate or reduce the dissonance of the experience.

Association

The nature of the interactions, associations, or social contacts among individuals is a key variable in the adaptation of the migrant to his new surroundings. There is a positive relationship between the time required for adaptation and the complexity of interpersonal associations. Most certainly the presence of the family circle or close friends is a big help in adjusting to a new surrounding.

For this study, association is defined very broadly as the natural or day-to-day interactions between individuals in the family, at work, in the marketplace, at group gatherings, and so on. In their daily life, the rural-background migrants had essentially equal association with four ethnic groups: Anglos, Blacks, Chinese and Spanish-speaking persons. On the other hand, more of the urban background subgroup interacted mainly with Anglos and Spanish-speaking individuals. The two subgroups do not differ when one considers close friendships or family associations. Nearly three-fourths of the close associations of both subgroups are with other Spanish-speaking people.

To a considerable extent, the association with other

Spanish-speaking people involves relatives who were living in Seattle before the study group arrived. About 60% of the migrants have relatives living in the greater metropolitan area of Seattle. Seventy percent of the rural migrants and 60% of the urban migrants visit relatives at least once a week.

The respondents believe that these continued strong ties with other Spanish-speaking peoples are a great asset to them of adapting to their new surroundings. Through sharing their experiences and knowledge, the migrants can adjust more readily. On the other hand, it is likely that this continued frequent subcultural interaction delays the assimilation or complete merging of the migrants into the total community in their new environment.[4]

Discrimination

Another important variable in adaptation is the extent and form of discrimination perceived by the migrants.[5] Forty percent of the respondents reported some form of discrimination. Discrimination was most often associated with employment and was displayed by employers, potential employers and by fellow non-Spanish-speaking employees. Different forms of discrimination by some neighbors, stores, and schools were also reported.

The underlying cause of both covert and overt discriminatory actions appears to be the stigma American society frequently imposes on a Mexican. And, of course, anyone whose native language is Spanish is Mexican! Despite the falsity of this stereotype, it can, and frequently does, strongly influence the attitudes and behavior of individuals and communities toward a Spanish-speaking minority in U.S. society. These preconceived attitudes and the resulting discriminatory actions are highly detrimental to the process of accommodation to a new environment.

Language

A common characteristic of the study group is bilingual (Spanish-English) capabilities. There is, however, considerable variation among the respondents in their language skills. One-third of the household heads indicate that their deficiency in English is a serious social and economic handicap. The oral language barrier is more common among the urban-to-urban migrants than among the rural-to-urban migrants. However, the urban-to-urban migrants are generally more proficient in English reading and writing. Nearly 60% of the urban background migrants are proficient in writing and reading English, compared with only one-third of the rural background subgroup.

Attitude toward the English language differs between the two subgroups. For example, both languages are spoken in the home in 55% of the rural-to-urban migrant households, compared to only 25% of the urban-to-urban migrant households. Furthermore, 30% of the rural-background subgroup speak only English at home, while this is the case in only 25% of the urban subgroup. Attitude toward English is also reflected by the language preference among the children. Only 15% of the children of rural-to-urban migrants prefer to speak Spanish at home, whereas 50% of the children in the urban-to-urban migrant families prefer Spanish.

Apart from these language preferences on the part of the children, the majority of the parents encourage their children to become proficient in both languages. The importance of learning English is, of course, obvious to the parents. All of the children in the families sampled can speak English.. About two-thirds can also speak Spanish. There is a strong desire on the part of most parents to keep their native tongue alive in the new generation.

Adaptation aids

Apart from friends or relatives, other sources help the migrant get established. These are the leaders of the Spanish-speaking community in Seattle and various public agencies.

More than three of five household heads in the study group could not identify any Spanish-speaking leaders in the Seattle area. Yet the balance of the household heads largely agreed on the identity of several leaders. Most of these leaders were associated with government supported institutions established to help the Spanish-speaking population of Seattle, namely, the "Equal Opportunity for Spanish-speaking Americans" (EOSSA) and "Active Americans." A few religious institutions and their leaders also were mentioned.

However, the most significant finding is the absence of any well-defined Spanish-speaking leadership in the majority of the study population. Assistance in adjusting to the new environment, then, is not readily available from these sources, and must remain an individual and personalized process, rather than institutional.

Members of the study group also knew very little about the various public institutions and programs serving Seattle. Over three-fourths (78%) of the respondents had no knowledge of any organization to which they can go for aid concerning problems such as housing, health care, employment information, additional education or training, obtaining loans or family counseling.

Only 15% had made one or more contacts with some agency (table 10). The rural-background migrants used the public programs more than their urban background counterparts. The former subgroup may be more aware of the existence of public programs because of previous farm labor work experience. Several households received aid simultaneously from more than one agency; for example, from welfare, food stamps, and public health services.

The data in table 10 record contacts made, *not* incidence of assistance received. One of four such contacts resulted in failure to receive any assistance, primarily because applicants were not qualified for the particular program.

Again, the overwhelmingly important finding concerning assistance by public agencies is that over three-fourths of the migrants were not aware of the possibility of re-

[4] Because of the unavoidable constraints on sampling, we could not find and study migrants who were genuinely assimilated into their Seattle environment.

[5] The perceived discrimination may not have been discrimination from the piewpoint of the alleged discriminator. Nevertheless, the respondent thought it was.

TABLE 10. Number of contacts with public agencies by a sample of Spanish-speaking Seattle residents, 1971[1]

Type of agency	Migrants' backgrounds	
	Rural	Urban
Welfare	12	3
Food stamps (USDA)	12	3
Public health	12	3
Unemployment	5	10
Veterans' Administration	1	0
Equal Opportunity for Spanish-Speaking Americans	1	0

[1]The number of contacts do not coincide with the number of families involved (15 families, or a total of 100 sampled) because some families contacted several different agencies.

ceiving any form of public assistance. Some were not aware of the agencies, some did not know how to contact the agency, and others were simply reluctant to accept public assistance.

Fulfillment of expectations

How do the migrant households feel about their relative well-being since moving to Seattle? Are they heartened or disillusioned relative to their expectations?

About 75% of the rural-to-rural migrants and 50% of the urban-to-urban migrants believed that their present situation was more desirable than that before migration. Nearly one-third of the urban migrants and one-sixth of the rural migrants were dissatisfied with the results of their move. The balance of the respondents saw little change in their overall well-being.

The migrants believe several factors strongly influence their satisfaction. Among the positive factors, 90% of the households believe they are better off economically now than before their move. Only 10% of the households sense improvement as a result of less discrimination. The major reasons for dissatisfaction are the absence of family and friends.

Perceived needs

The respondents were asked to specify and rank the most pressing problems facing them at the time of the interview. The most often mentioned problem was the lack of adequate opportunities to obtain more training or education. Forty-five percent of the respondents said this is the most important constraint to faster upward social and economic mobility.

Several migrants said they thought the type of training offered in many of the vocational schools tends to perpetuate the poverty cycle. They refer to financial, linguistic, discriminatory, and health difficulties they meet in trying to get higher education and its rewards. The respondents often mentioned shortcomings in the administration or excution of some education and training programs designed to help them. In particular, they were sensitive to problems of equity in the distribution of benefits of some programs among various minority ethnic subgroups in the city. Another facet of this perceived problem of inadequate educational opportunities is the lack of facilities for additional training in the English language.

The second problem in order of importance perceived by migrants is their inability to obtain remunerative jobs. This is, of course, closely associated with the preceding problem of education and skill.

Ten percent of the migrants list racial discrimination as a major problem. Incidents were recorded that related to a broad array of situations, ranging from neighborhood relations with employers, schools and shopping in stores. Another 10% of the respondents listed inadequate housing as their major concern. Here again, there is a strong interdependence with the previously described concern for opportunities to earn higher incomes.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This invesigation focused on the interaction between the Spanish-speaking migrant household and the community to which they migrated—Seattle, Washington. In the process of accommodation between the migrant household and the community, our society seems to demand that the migrants adapt to the community. The community remains essentially inflexible, making only minor efforts to facilitate this association between man and his new and strange surroundings. In other words, the burden of accommodation rests almost entirely on the migrant.

The policy implications of this largely one-sided accommodation process may reasonably concern:

1. what the migrant should do to accommodate to the community more effectively.

2. what the community may do to accommodate the migrant more effectively.

Most of the policy-type recommendations that may apply to individual migrants or migrant families would still depend on public or private facilities. For example, the migrant may be advised to obtain more education, improve his facility with the English language, learn a new trade, etc. But most, if not all, of these "advice to the migrant" type policy recommendations depend on the existence of a publicly provided service. Therefore, priority should be given to policies that close the gap between the migrants' actual needs and community-provided services supposed to help migrants (1).

Based on this premise, most of the policy inferences drawn from this investigation refer to modifications of public institutions that might improve or add services to Spanish-speaking migrants of Seattle.

One of the fundamental outcomes of the preceding analyses is that households of the Spanish-speaking study group differ and the language (Spanish) characteristic alone does not discriminate sufficiently for remedial program design. The Spanish-speaking migrants with rural backgrounds have social and economic characteristics that differ distinctly from those of their urban background counterparts. They have fewer years of education (7 as compared with 12 years), they are in blue collar rather than white collar occupations, they earn substantially less money, and are more often jobless. They generally have

an overall lower level-of-living with less likelihood of moving upward socially and economically.

Even within the rural- and urban-background groups, there are substantial differences, particularly with respect to education and income. Therefore, generalized remedial programs probably will not reach many of those at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale. Additional effort will be required to find and carefully identify the constraints on individual families and to classify their constraints into possibilities and requirements for resolutions. For example, the kind of assistance needed by an older, poverty stricken migrant widow with 5 years of schooling is quite different from that required by a younger, low income migrant household head with a high school education.

In spite of the varied needs of widely differing situations, the study also reveals that many of the adjustment problems of the Spanish-speaking migrants to an urban center are similar enough to yield to attack by rather generalized efforts. For example, nearly all of the study group were unaware of the existing public agencies that could help them. Meanwhile, the agencies' representatives say they lack money to employ people with special skills who could identify and reach those in need of help. It is strongly suggests a need for effort devoted to accumulating additional information on specific needs of the Spanish-speaking groups in urban areas such as Seattle.

Although this study has revealed guidelines through the vehicle of a small case study, it shows the need for a special census before an overall coordinated remedial program can be launched. This would allow a classification of the Spanish-speaking population by type of problem and facilitate formation of specific action programs to attack specific problems of subgroups.

The study group were unable, by and large, to identify leaders among their minority group. This suggests that a study designed to identify the internal power structure (leadership) of this population would aid execution of public programs. The leaders can serve, and likely only they can serve effectively, as links between programs and recipients.

Yet another recommendation stems from the observation that the most critical adjustment experiences of the migrants occur during the first few weeks after arrival in Seattle. Even though most migrants in the study group had friends or relatives in Seattle to help them meet basic needs, the migrant soon faced the problems of finding employment and housing. They often did not know how.

An accepted and widely publicized bilingual information agency could act as a buffer between the migrant and the new environment, lessening the feeling of being dominated by the strange surroundings. It could also be more effective in matching the migrants' capabilities with the appropriate opportunities for employment. The activities of the information center could, in effect, shorten the length of the adaptation period.

Potential programs relating to the language barrier could contribute to the overall well-being of the Spanish-speaking community. One is to increase the opportunities for classroom instruction for adults so they can learn and improve their proficiency in English. The other is employment of more bilingual people in public agencies that serve Spanish-speaking people. This would not only improve communication between the agencies and their clientele, but would also reduce the fear and reluctance of the Spanish-speaking people to seek and use the services of the agencies.

A final recommendation concerns the leaders of the organizations that serve the Spanish-speaking population of the Seattle area. Their effectiveness would be greatly enhanced if a more unified effort were devloped among them. This would not only increase the efficiency in use of scarce financial and leadership resources, but would also enable individuals and agencies to exert a more vigorous and effective effort to accomplish specific program objectives.

With the realization of these policy and program suggestions (special census, micro classification of problems and appropriate remedial action, a unified leadership, "early arrival" buffer service, and greater use of bilingual people in key roles) there is little doubt that both the individual and social costs of migration would be substantially reduced. As Mrs. Reul points out, "All too many of the policies of health, welfare, education, and government agencies are still geared to the existence of some mythical nonmobile population where movers are viewed with suspicion as a threat." She goes on to say, ". . . we must examine the services we have available in light of migration trends and patterns, both numerical and geographical" (1).

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